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George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741 - 1782

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I. THE INDIAN TRADER

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George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741-1782.

I. THE INDIAN TRADER.

The mainspring which kept the Indian trade in North America in operation during the eighteenth century was the demand for furs and skins in western Europe. The customs and styles of dress among European nobles and courtiers, ecclesiastical and university officials, and wealthy burghers created the demand for furs; the demand for skins rested chiefly upon the needs of the more humble classes of society. A second great market for furs and skins was in China. Until towards the close of the period under consideration this market only indirectly affected the Indian trade by absorbing the cheaper grade of Russian furs and skins and thus decreasing the supply available for western Europe. By the time of the American Revolution, however, a considerable number of American furs and skins were sent from London to China, either through Russia or in the ships of the East India Company, thus foreshadowing the trading ventures of John Jacob Astor and Stephen Girard.¹

From the earliest days of the Greeks and Romans until the sixteenth century the people of central Asia and western Europe were supplied with furs and skins from the great northern plains of Eurasia. Here the Russian traders' frontier was gradually pushed east-

¹ Chambers Papers relating to Canada, 1692-1792. (N. Y. Pub. Lib.)

ward until in the latter part of the eighteenth century it was moving rapidly down the western coast of North America.² At the time of the discovery of America, Vienna, Danzig, Lübeck and Hamburg were the great fur marts of Europe, and the bold voyages of English navigators to Muscovy were based in part upon the demand for furs. The furs and skins from the second great region of supply—northern North America—had to compete with those from Russia and Siberia in the markets of Europe. So successfully was this done that the great fur marts were shifted to London, Amsterdam and Paris, and the quest for furs took the place of the quest for gold, silver and precious stones in luring the white man to penetrate into the vast unknown regions north of Mexico.

If the trade in furs and skins is looked at from the point of view of the uncivilized native who could furnish peltry and hides, one finds equally strong economic forces influencing his conduct. In his estimation of values, based upon the laws of supply and demand, the exchange of a fine beaver pelt for a sharp knife was a great bargain and gave him as much satisfaction as it did to the more civilized trader. The mutual immense profits of the trade in furs and skins and other irresistible economic forces involved, led both savages and civilized men to desire to establish and maintain trading relations in spite of the heavy risks to life and property to all concerned in such trade.

The desire to control the lucrative trade in furs and skins with the natives in North America was one of the numerous causes for the great rivalry of England and

²The following quotation is suggestive for the colonizing movement in North America: "Der Zobel (sable) hat die Erschliessung und Eroberung Sibiriens veranlasst; er hat auch einen grossen Teil der Kosten, mit seiner Haut bezahlt."—Klein, Jos.: *Der Sibirische Pelzhandel und seine Bedeutung für die Eroberung Sibiriens*, p. i.—Cf. Golder, F. A.: *Russian Expansion on the Pacific, 1641-1850*.

France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Towards the close of the former century they entered upon an important trade war in North America for the control of this traffic which, unlike their military conflicts, never ceased until after 1763. In it the native tribes were mere tools and pawns which both sides exploited.

The trader's frontier in this conflict was long, wide, and constantly shifting. During the second quarter of the eighteenth century French and English traders met in the region between Lake Superior and Hudson's Bay, but here there were such vast regions to exploit that for a long time their rivalry was only serious to those immediately involved. Similar competition took place in the wilderness between New England and Canada, but here also the rivalry was not serious, for there were no longer rich fur fields to exploit in this region nor were there strategic lines of communication to threaten. The Indian country between New York and New France controlled great arteries of commerce; here, however, the English forces of expansion, which in earlier decades had begun to penetrate the region around Lake Michigan, lost vitality because of various conditions in colonial New York. One of these was the establishment, in spite of the opposition of both governments, of trading relations whereby Albany traders gave up their dreams of trading directly with the far West in return for the opportunity of exchanging English manufactured goods for French furs near at home. In contrast to the Indian traders of Pennsylvania, those of New York generally did not penetrate far into the interior to seek furs and skins at each Indian village, but utilized the Iroquois as middlemen to bring furs and skins to them at such posts as Albany and Oswego. In the extreme south, Carolina traders had once planned to develop the trans-Mississippi country and even the Ohio and

Illinois regions. By about 1725 the French had limited the activities of the English until their trade with tribes which bordered on the Gulf of Mexico or on the Mississippi had almost ceased.³

During the generation preceding 1754 the most dynamic and significant phase of the Anglo-French rivalry in the Indian trade was in the central and upper Ohio Valley and in the region south of Lake Erie. In preceding decades a few Carolina, New York and perhaps Virginia, traders had reached this region, but their visits were sporadic and not consistently followed up. Later, Pennsylvania traders began to develop consistently its rich trading possibilities. The expansion of the field of their activities was based upon a sufficient supply of low-priced merchandise and it was the result of their own initiative and resourcefulness; not until their influence had about reached its height did their government aid them. Meanwhile the French had been moving eastward into this region. They shifted their main line of communication between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi from the Fox-Wisconsin route to the Chicago-Illinois route and then to the Maumee-Wabash route. To control the latter, Ft. Ouiatenon was erected by New France, about 1720, at the head of navigation for large canoes on the Wabash, and Ft. Vincennes by Louisiana, in 1731, on the lower Wabash. At times, a small fort on the Maumee was maintained which, with Detroit, completed this line of defense against English penetration. The region east of this line was left open to the English. The first "Winning of the West" by the Anglo-Saxon followed; in almost every important Indian village in this region one or more Pennsylvania traders were to be found.

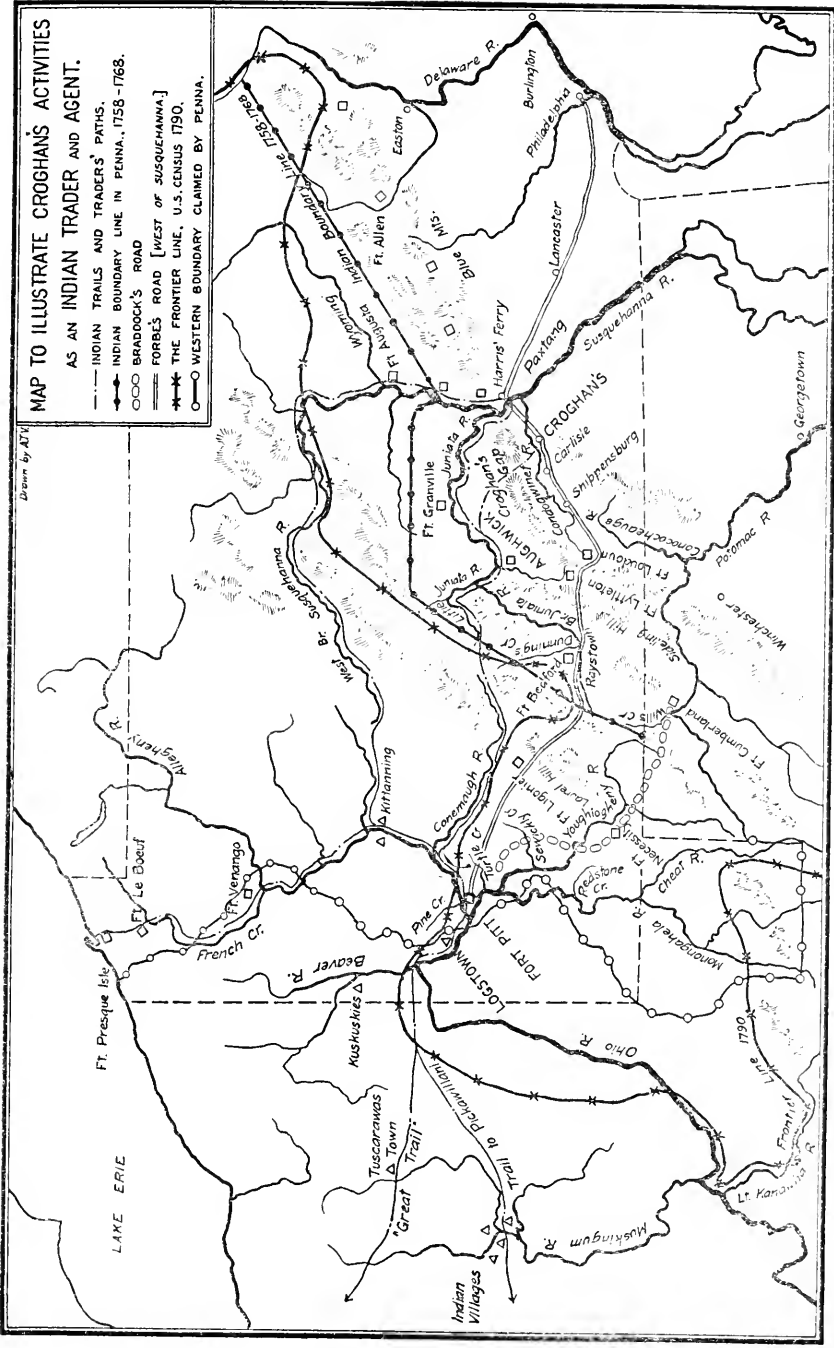
The growth of their influence is well shown by the

³ Crane, V. W.: "The Tennessee River as the Road to Carolina," *Miss. Valley Hist. Rev.*, 3: 3 ff; Crane: "The Southern Frontier in Queen Anne's War," *Am. Hist. Rev.*, 24: 379 ff.

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE CROGHAN'S ACTIVITIES AS AN INDIAN TRADER AND AGENT.

- - - INDIAN TRAILS AND TRADERS' PATHS.
 - - - INDIAN BOUNDARY LINE IN PENNA., 1758-1768.
 ○○○ BRADDOCK'S ROAD
 ——— FORBES ROAD [WEST OF SUSQUEHANNA]
 * * * THE FRONTIER LINE, U.S. CENSUS 1790.
 ○ —○ WESTERN BOUNDARY CLAIMED BY PENNA.

Drawn by A.P.



2 75

May 26 1747

I am Just return'd from the woods
 and has brought a letter to french Supt & some Compa^{ny}
 for y^e Governour from a post of y^e Six Nations Indians
 That has this Darling on y^e Tenders of Lake Argy
 and Not being able to go Down My self So soon
 after such a Long Journey I have forth with send
 it by the Purch in hopes it May reach to y^e
 Governour hands before the 1st^h These Indians were
 always in the french Interest till Now But
 This Spring almost all the Indians in the woods
 have Declard against y^e french & I think this
 will be a fair opportunity if perswaded by some
 Small Presents to have all y^e french cut off in
 their parts for the Indians are very Much Led
 by any Thing that will tend to their own self
 Interest and will think a Great Deal of a little
 powder & such at this time besides it will
 be a Means of Browing them that has not yett Surr^{er}
 I remain with respects y^e humble servant to y^e Governour

George Croghan

PS if there be any answer to be
 sent to these Indians your self
 please to lett them know by y^e bearer
 you will send back strictly for
 some of My skins that I lost
 the hind

GEORGE CROGHAN TO SECRETARY RICHARD PETERS
 OF PHILADELPHIA

The original letter, of which the above facsimile is a reproduction on a smaller scale, is the earliest document written by Croghan that has been found. It is preserved in the Provincial Papers in the State Library at Harrisburg.

following incidents. In 1707, Governor Evans of Pennsylvania feared the influence of French traders even east of the lower Susquehanna; he personally led a party thither to capture Nicole Godin, a trader of French birth, who was suspected of aiding the enemy. The Governor reported to the provincial council that after he had captured Nicole, "having mounted Nicole upon a horse, and tied his legs under the Belly," he "brought him a Prisoner to Philadia, in the Common Gaol of which he now lies."⁴ Less than half a century later, in the early fifties, Paul Pierce, a Pennsylvania trader, had "4,000 Weight of summer skins taken at another town on Wabasha. . . ."⁵

These incidents illustrate the fact that the Pennsylvania traders had assumed the aggressive and, in spite of the Appalachian barrier, had pushed the trader's frontier 500 miles westward in less than a half century; in 1750 this line was near the Wabash and Maumee rivers, nearly 500 miles in advance of the settler's frontier in Pennsylvania, which was just starting to move up the Juniata Valley and to cross the Blue Mountains. Nor had the expansive force of this movement been exhausted when it reached the Wabash and Maumee; it began to cross this line—a weak barrier at best—and move on towards the Mississippi, bringing anxiety into the hearts of the best French officials, who felt the potential power of English influence even in the distant Illinois country.⁶ A contemporary map legend

⁴ Gov. Evans' Journal and Report, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 2: 385, 390.

⁵ Pierce's affidavit of losses, O. Co. MSS., 1: 32.

⁶ In 1742 Bienville reported home that the Illinois were restless and that some of them had gone east to meet English traders.—C 13A, 27: 81-84. (Archives Nationales, Paris.) Vaudreuil reported in 1744 and in 1745 recommending the establishment of a fort on the lower Ohio to limit the activities of the English traders and to keep control of the Kickapoo and Mascoutens.—C 13 A, 28: 245-250 and C 13A, 29: 69. In 1747 three Indian emissaries came to the Illinois tribes to win them over to the English and were frustrated with difficulty.—"Diary of Events in 1747," *Wis. Hist. Coll.* 17: 487. An

described the attitude of the Indians in Illinois as follows: "Illinois mostly inclined to the French at the Treaty of Utrecht and to the English at that of Aix-la-Chapelle."

Thus by 1750 the English were ready to take control of the Wabash-Maumee route, the best line of communication between New France and Louisiana, and they threatened French dominion in the West. When, during King George's War, the highest French officials came to realize the peril of this quiet penetration of English power, they determined at any cost to secure sole and absolute control of the entire Ohio country. The Pennsylvania Indian traders were thus chiefly responsible for the immediate opening of the French and Indian War.

Their aggressive westward push during the period of 1730-1775, was aided by the moral and financial support of the wealthy merchants and colonial officials in Philadelphia. During this period Philadelphia had become the largest town in all America. Its virile energy and the many-sidedness of its interests were typified in the life of its greatest citizen, Benjamin Franklin. Its large and profitable commerce, firmly buttressed upon a prosperous and rich agricultural region resulted in the accumulation of surplus capital, part of which was available for projects to exploit and develop the vast wilderness beyond the settler's frontier.

The man who played the most prominent part in this

official of Louisiana reported in 1750 that the influence of an English establishment on the Riviere de la Roche (Great Miami) extended even to Illinois and that it should be broken up.—C 13A, 34: 321-323. In 1751, thirty-three Piankashaw Indians (an important tribe living west of the Wabash whose friendship was to play an important part in Croghan's activities) appeared among the French settlements in Illinois to start an Indian uprising.—Alvord, C. W.: *Centennial History of Illinois*, 1: 234. In 1752 Vaudreuil reported home that deserters from the army in Illinois had gone over to the English.—C 13 A, 36: 81.

¹ Gibson, John: *Map of the Middle British Colonies in America*. 1758. (N. Y. Pub. Lib.)

highly important and significant phase of the westward movement of Anglo-Saxon civilization was George Croghan. Of his early life and the more personal side of his career we know but little. No portrait of him has been discovered⁸ and in the course of this investigation, not a single reference to his wife was found; the date and exact place of his birth are also unknown. We know that his early life was spent in Dublin, Ireland.⁹ The education which he there received was so meager that he was pronounced illiterate by Bouquet.¹⁰ One finds the spelling in Croghan's letters amusing, provided it is not necessary to decipher many of them.¹¹ He migrated to America in 1741.¹²

⁸ In J. S. Walton's *Conrad Weiser and the Indian Policy of Pennsylvania*, there is a picture of Colonel George Croghan, famous in the War of 1812, taken in a U. S. Army uniform, which is erroneously ascribed to the earlier George Croghan.

⁹ Gov. Morris to Gov. Sharpe, Jan. 7, 1754, *Pa. Arch.*, 2: 114.

¹⁰ Bouquet to Gen. Gage, Dec. 22, 1764, Bouquet Coll. (Canadian Archives), A 23-2, p. 464. No evidence has been found to prove the statement that Croghan was educated at Dublin University, made both by C. R. Williams in an article on George Croghan in the *O. Arch. and Hist. Pub.*, 12: 381 and by L. E. Keeler in an article on the Croghan Celebration in the same publication, 16: 8.

¹¹ The legibility of Croghan's letters varies greatly. The following postscript to a letter to Peters, dated Sept. 26, 1758, suggests one cause of such variation: "You 'l Excuse boath Writing and peper, and guess at my Maining, fer I have this Minnitt 20 Drunken Indians about me . . ."—*Pa. Arch.*, 3: 544.

¹² Various dates from 1740 to 1747 are given by writers on Pennsylvania history. The date 1741 is incidentally established by an affidavit which Croghan made before the Board of Trade in London on July 27, 1764, to aid the Penns in their case against Connecticut's land claims. C. A. Hanna in *The Wilderness Trail*, 2: 30, following the copy in the Penn MSS., Penn Land Grants 1681-1806, pages 205-209, adds that Croghan was made a Councillor of the Six Nations at Onondago in 1746, which would be rather significant. However, this copy of the affidavit seems to have been drafted by a third party, for it makes many inaccurate statements about Croghan. These are corrected in Croghan's own handwriting in a copy in the Penn. MSS., Wyoming Controversy, 5: 71-75. The qualifying phrases which he introduces beside the above statement make it appear that it was incorrect, but that for the sake of Penn's case, it was so stated to carry weight in London.

Because he came from Dublin he was charged during the French and Indian War with being a Roman Catholic.¹³ We know, however, that he was an Episcopalian. His signature, along with those of Robert Callender and Thomas Smallman, his close associates in the Indian trade, was attached to a petition in 1765 from the handful of Episcopalians in the frontier town of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to their provincial assembly. It asked for the authorization of a lottery for the benefit of ten Episcopal churches; the one at Carlisle was to receive £200 to aid its building fund.¹⁴ In 1769, Croghan wrote Sir William Johnson to recommend an Episcopal rector for an appointment, modestly adding, "for tho I Love ye Church very well I know I ought Nott to Meddle with Church Matters."¹⁵ When Croghan died his funeral was held in St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.¹⁶

These facts are significant. Evidently Croghan was not a typical Scotch-Irishman, for he had the religion of the English Pale. The fact that he was interested in a church at once puts him on a higher plane than most Indian traders who cared nothing for either church or religion. Being a member of the Church of England helped him to establish closer relations with the Penns and with many British officials. In the normal conduct of his business and in his official duties Croghan was not often near any minister or church. Even at Ft. Pitt, where he usually had his headquarters from 1758 to 1777, there was no organized church till after his death.¹⁷ Army chaplains were sometimes

¹³ Gov. Sharpe to Gov. Morris, Dec. 27, 1754, *Md. Arch.*, 1888 : 153.

¹⁴ *Pa. Stat. at Large*, 6 : 382; Linn, J. B.: "The Butler Family of the Pennsylvania Line." *PA. MAG. OF HIST. AND BIOG.*, 7 : 2.

¹⁵ Croghan to Johnson, Nov. 16, 1769, *Doc. Hist. of N. Y.*, 4 : 419.

¹⁶ Wm. Powell's account with the Croghan Estate, 1804, MSS., Register of Wills, County of Philadelphia.

¹⁷ Dallinger, C. W.: *Pittsburgh: A Sketch of its Early Social Life*, 9-10.

stationed there and missionaries came to tarry a few days. The latter were usually welcomed by Croghan, at whose home they frequently dined. One of these in describing his visit to Croghan in 1772, writes that the latter presented him with "a bear's skin to sleep on, a belt of wampum to present to the Indians, and 60 pounds of biscuit to supply me on my journey."¹⁸ Croghan's religion was reflected in his daily conduct in business and in office to about the same extent as is religion in the life of the average business man or officeholder of today.¹⁹

Croghan had a number of relatives in America who had a common interest in developing the great West of their day and to whom he was a guide and leader. William Trent was his brother-in-law, Edward Ward his half brother, Thomas Smallman his cousin, John Connolly his nephew, William Powell and Daniel Clark his kinsmen.²⁰ Clark emigrated from Ireland and became a clerk to Croghan; after the Revolution he became the most prominent American in New Orleans. A Mohawk Indian daughter of Croghan became the wife of the famous Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant.²¹ His only white child, Susannah, for whom he had a tender regard, which was reciprocated by her,²² was born in 1750 at Carlisle and died in 1790. At the age of fifteen she was married to Lieutenant Augustine Prevost, son of the British General of the same name, with whom he

¹⁸ Jones, Rev. D.: *Diary*, 21; Cf. McClure, Rev. D.: *Diary*, 46, 101.

¹⁹ This statement is based upon a study of Croghan's entire life. E. W. Hassler's statement in *Old Westmoreland: a History of Western Pennsylvania during the Revolution*, p. 10, that "He was an Irishman by birth and an Episcopalian by religion, when he permitted religion to trouble him," is probably an incorrect deduction from the general characterization of Indian traders.

²⁰ Croghan's will, Register of Wills, County of Philadelphia.

²¹ Brant MSS. (Wis. Hist. Soc.), 1G2, 1F24, 13F103; Thomson C.: *Alienation of the Delaware and Shawnees*, 178.

²² Croghan's will; Trent to Mrs. Prevost, Aug. 21, 1775, Hist. Soc. of Pa. Coll.

is sometimes confused. To them twelve children were born at various places from Quebec to Jamaica inclusive, six of whom survived infancy and became the chief heirs of Croghan.²³ Aaron Burr was related to Prevost by marriage and served as his attorney; Burr's interest in the West may therefore have emanated from Croghan.

The immigrant who went west from Philadelphia during the decade 1740 to 1750, as did Croghan, would find that soon after he had left the Quaker city behind, the German element became predominant and that as he approached the frontier the hardy Scotch-Irish in turn composed the majority of the population. The road which he followed would take him through Lancaster, the largest inland town in the British colonies; from it one important road led through Paxtang Township, which bordered the eastern bank of the Susquehanna in the vicinity of the present city of Harrisburg. At this place the river is not deep, but is a mile wide. John Harris had settled here and was operating one of the most important ferries which crossed it; Harris' Ferry is shown on all contemporary maps of Pennsylvania.

The newcomer was now close to the settler's frontier line. The region across the river towards Maryland had been purchased from the Iroquois in 1736, though squatters in this region were legally recognized since January 14, 1734, when the first "Blunston License" was issued to allow settlement before the Indian claims

²³ Brant MSS., 16F 65, 16F 66, 16F 72; Draper MSS. (Wis. Hist. Soc.), 16F 76. Dennis Crohan was an intimate friend but no relation to Croghan.—Etting Coll., Misc. MSS., 1 : 110. General Wm. Croghan of the Revolution, who married a sister to George Rogers Clark and helped develop the state of Kentucky, was a very intimate personal friend of George Croghan.—Byars, Wm. V.: *B. and M. Gratz*, 175, 183, 185, 194. Col. George Croghan, son of Wm. Croghan and hero of the War of 1812, is often confused with the elder George Croghan. Some of the descendants of the Kentucky Croghans recognize a relationship to the elder Croghan while others deny it.

had been purchased.²⁴ The Juniata Valley with the region south of it extending to the Maryland border was not purchased till 1754. In the preceding decade the most distant lands open to settlement in the province were in the level and fertile Cumberland Valley. This lay beyond Harris' Ferry, on either side of the winding Conogwinet River, which empties into the Susquehanna, and of the Conococheague River, which flows in the opposite direction and empties into the Potomac. South Mountain, later made famous by Robert E. Lee, forms a wall on the southeast for this physiographic unit. From its crest one can see on a clear day the opposite rampart, North Mountain, also known as the Kittatinny or the Blue Mountains. Beyond them in the primeval forest lay the Indian country, but to get to its most attractive regions it was necessary to cross range after range of the mountain barrier. This was done by the venturesome Indian traders of the province. When the fur fields east of the mountains had been exhausted, with no enticing possibilities to the north or south, the traders were presented with the alternative of either settling down to a more prosaic life, or of somehow getting across the barrier to the far western country. A contemporary describes the result of their decision as follows: "Between 4 and 10 degrees of Longitude west from Philadelphia there is a spacious country which we call Allegheny from the name of a River which runs thro' it and is the main branch of the Mississippi. . . . In this country all our Indian trade centers . . . the most of our return is Deer Skins. The Indian traders have had great credit with the merchants."²⁵

²⁴ Samuel Blunston was granted a special commission on January 11, 1734, authorizing him to issue special licenses upon which patents could be obtained after the Indian claims had been purchased. The original list of licenses granted, ending on October 31, 1737, has been found recently and will soon be published in the *Pennsylvania Archives*.

²⁵ Lewis Evans' Brief Account of Pa., 1753, in, Papers relating to Pa., Carolina, etc., Du Simitiere Coll. (Library Co. of Philadelphia.)

Various routes across the mountains had been prepared for the traders by nature and by the buffalo and the Indian, and have since become great arteries of commerce followed by trunk line railroads. The least important and most difficult of these followed the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Another route passed through Shippensburg and Bedford, utilizing the Rays-town Branch of the Juniata; from 1758, when Forbes constructed the road which bore his name, until after 1830, when the railroad and canal became important, this was one of the most important routes to the West; as a turnpike it was the great rival of the Cumberland Road. The oldest and most important route to the West during the decade, 1740 to 1750, followed the Juniata and Conemaugh (Kishkimentas) Rivers.²⁶ It was almost always followed by the traders before 1754 in going to the West and somewhat less frequently on their return. Shortly before 1754, Pennsylvania traders in returning from the West were beginning to follow the fourth great route across the mountains, which utilized the Monongahela, Wills Creek Water Gap and the Potomac.²⁷ When they had once reached the latter near the end of Cumberland Valley they found available a "great road" recently finished, leading through the valley and connecting at Harris' Ferry with the great highway to Philadelphia.²⁸

To traverse one of the great routes from the Susquehanna to the Ohio required about fourteen days. Until after the French and Indian War transportation by

²⁶ In 1855 the traces left by thousands upon thousands of warriors and packhorses which traveled it for years were still plainly visible.—Jones, U. J.: *History of Juniata Valley*, 135.

²⁷ Washington to Bouquet, Aug. 2, 1758, *Writings of George Washington*, 2 : 62; *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 607.

²⁸ *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 6 : 302; Evans' Map of the Middle British Colonies, *Pa. Arch.*, *Third Series*, *App. to Volumes I-X*; Instructions of Gov. Hamilton to N. Scull and T. Cookson, surveyors, *Early Hist. of Carlisle* (1841), 1 : 6.

wagon stopped at the mountains; from there on only Indian trails were available. To the Pennsylvania trader the packhorse took the place which the canoe occupied among the "*coureurs de bois*;" even after he was across the mountains and beyond the Ohio he preferred it to the canoe. Usually two or more men went with a packhorse train, which seldom consisted of more than twenty horses, each carrying about one hundred and fifty pounds on their pack saddles. They followed the trail in single file with one man in front and one in the rear. At night the horses were turned loose to secure their forage as best they could. Bells were fastened to them to aid in finding them again. A packhorse equipped with saddle, surcingles and bells was valued at from £7 to £25. From twenty to thirty per cent was normally added to Philadelphia prices for the cost of transporting goods by wagon and packhorse to the Ohio.²⁹

The chief Indian tribes with whom the Pennsylvanians traded were the Six Nations, who claimed dominion over the entire Ohio region and several hundred of whose representatives were scattered along the Ohio and known as Mingoes; the Delawares, living around the upper Ohio; the Shawnee, dwelling along the Ohio and Scioto; the Wyandots or Hurons, inhabiting the territory south of Lake Erie; and the Miami or Twightwee, living on the Big Miami and beyond.³⁰

To them were brought rum; guns, gunpowder, lead, flints, tomahawks and vermilion; strouds, especially those of a "Deep Blue or Lively Red," blanketing, matchcoating, linen and calicoes "of the brightest and

²⁹ O. Co. MSS., 1 : 7; *Md. Arch.*, 1888, 126; *Pa. Col. Rec.* 5 : 294, 295, 490, 498; *ibid.*, 9 : 495; Evans, L.: *Analysis of a Map of the Middle British Colonies*, 25.

³⁰ Conrad Weiser's Journal, 1748, *Pa. Col. Rec.* 5 : 348-358; Croghan's Journal 1751, *Pa. Col. Rec.* 5 : 530-539; Hutchins, T.: *Topographical Description, etc.*, App. III.

flourishing collours"; wampum; lace, thread, gartering, ribbons; women's stockings, "red, yellow, and green" preferred, and all kinds of ready-made clothing; knives of all kinds, brass and tin kettles, traps, axes, hoes, brass wire, files, awls, needles, buttons and combs; jewsharps, bells, whistles, looking glasses, rings and silver jewelry of all kinds.³¹

These goods, with the exception of rum, came principally from England. For them were bartered deer, elk, buffalo and bear skins; beaver, raccoon, fox, cat, muskrat, mink, fisher and other furs; food supplies and sometimes personal services.³² The annual value of this trade was probably less than £40,000.³³

This trade involved a connected chain of credits based in the end upon English capital. The English manufacturer or merchant sold to the Philadelphia merchant on credit; he in turn advanced the goods to the larger traders and they to their employees; finally it also became more and more customary to trust the Indians with goods in order that they could hunt successfully. If, therefore, something should happen to the Indian so that he failed to bring in skins and pelts, bankruptcy and financial stringency would follow all along the line.³⁴ Certain merchants in London, Bristol, Philadelphia and Lancaster specialized in this trade. The firm of Shippen and Lawrence and the Jewish firm of Levy, Franks and Simon, with whom the Gratzs were later connected, are examples of those groups of Pennsylvania merchants that served as factors in the Indian trade. They were usually composed of one or more residents in Philadelphia and a western representative

³¹ Lists prepared under Croghan's supervision are found in O. Co. MSS., 1 : 37 and in C. O. 5 : 61. Cf. *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, 18 : 245; Byars: *B. and M. Gratz*, 114.

³² O. Co. MSS., 1 : 44.

³³ *Pa. Gaz.*, Sept. 26, 1754; cf. *ibid.*, Apr. 25, 1754.

³⁴ Cf. Gov. Wright to Bd. of Trade, Dec. 29, 1754, Bd. of Tr. Pap., Plan. Gen'l., 22 : 163.

in Lancaster. The former often had his own ships and imported suitable goods from England; under his management the skins and furs for export were sorted, examined for moth and finally packed for shipment; the representative in Lancaster usually had charge of warehouses where traders' supplies were kept and furs and skins temporarily stored. Frequently these groups were "concerned" with a prominent Indian trader in active charge of a number of ordinary traders. Aside from these regular partnerships and joint-stock companies these men were often "concerned" together in an "adventure;" *i. e.*, when a particular business opportunity presented itself they would pool a part of their capital, goods, or personal services, sometimes without even signing articles of agreement, and then divide the profits or losses in proportion. Such a business system was especially favorable to the young man or the newcomer with little more than his personal services to contribute. Such groups, especially when united, were an important factor in trade, land speculation and politics, particularly in relation to the West.³⁵

It was into such an environment that Croghan entered soon after coming to America. Shortly after 1741 we find him on the frontier in the lower Condogwinet Valley, then organized as Pennsborough Township of Lancaster County. Here he patented in 1746, 1748 and 1749, three tracts of land totaling 474 acres. Nearby were 354 acres which had been patented in 1744 and then conveyed to Trent and Croghan; of this tract Croghan became sole owner in 1746. In 1747 he added 210 acres, patented in 1742. In the same year he purchased 172 acres in Paxtang Township, which had been patented in 1738 and of which he became the fourth owner. This was the only large tract east of the Sus-

³⁵ Byars, Wm. V.: *The First American Movement West.*

quehanna which Croghan ever held. Richard Hockley, Receiver General of Quit-rents for the Penns, Trent and Croghan took out a warrant for 300 acres in this region, but to it they never secured title. He also purchased lots and built several houses in Shippensburg, which was then being laid out. Altogether within four years Croghan had acquired 1210 acres within a short distance of Harris' Ferry.

The frequent changes in the ownership of these tracts are indicative of the spirit of land speculation prevalent among these early pioneers. Croghan early caught this spirit. At the same time that he was acquiring new lands he was mortgaging to Philadelphians who had surplus capital to invest those lands which he had only recently acquired. In 1747 he mortgaged two tracts to Jeremiah Warder for £500, which he paid off in 1749. In 1748 he mortgaged two other tracts to Mary Plumsted for £300. In 1749 he mortgaged four tracts to Richard Peters, Secretary to the Provincial Council, for £1000. In 1751, after Croghan had held six tracts for only five years or less, he conveyed them to Peters, thereby cancelling all his mortgages and receiving £1000 besides. His business relations with Peters and Hockley, two influential colonial officials, are significant.³⁶

It was on the 354 acre tract, located but five miles from Harris' Ferry,³⁷ Pennsylvania's gateway to the West, that Croghan established his home. This he made his headquarters during approximately his first ten years in America. This point was strategically located with reference to all of the routes across the mountains; the newly-discovered and best approach to the Juniata route passed by his home and crossed

³⁶ Deed Bk. A, I, p. 19, Register of Deeds, Carlisle, Pa.; Peters MSS., 2 : 86, 113, 114, 120; *ibid*, 6 : 87; *Pa. Arch.*, 3d ser., 2 : 180; Magaw to Shippen, Jan. 25, 1746, Shippen Corresp., 1 : 73.

³⁷ *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 135; *Pa. Arch.*, 3d ser., *Appendix to Vol. 1-10*.

the Blue Mountains through the best gap in the vicinity. This soon appeared on all contemporary maps as "Croghan's Gap."³⁸ His home, "Croghan's," likewise appeared on these maps along with Carlisle and Shippenburg, as being one of the three landmarks on the important road through Cumberland Valley. It soon became one of the places where traders and emissaries often stopped on their way to and from the western country. It also served as a convenient meeting-place for whites and Indians.³⁹

Croghan made this place the eastern terminus for his operations as an Indian trader. It served as his home for a few weeks in each year and provided food and shelter for employees and for his packhorses, which could recuperate here after their hard trip over the mountains. Log warehouses provided storage for skins, furs, and Indian goods. On his adjacent tract of 171 acres he had an extensive tanyard where an additional value could be given to the deerskins which he brought out of the West.⁴⁰

Croghan was probably able to acquire and develop these properties through his profits from the Indian trade. In all likelihood he came to America with little or no capital, but fortunately for him, business methods did not require much for the Indian trade. This trade appealed to his restless spirit and adventurous nature. He entered into it almost immediately upon his arrival in 1741.⁴¹ In 1744 and again in 1747, he was licensed as an Indian trader.⁴² His success is graphically shown

³⁸ Today it is called Sterret's Gap and is still important, being utilized by a state highway.

³⁹ Prov. Pap. (State Library of Pa.), 10 : 31 and 11 : 57; *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 348, 358; *Pa. Arch.*, 4th ser., 2 : 117.

⁴⁰ Peters MSS., 6 : 87; C. Weiser to R. Peters, July 10, 1748, *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 8.

⁴¹ Gov. Morris to Gov. Hardy, July 5, 1756, *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 689.

⁴² *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 14; *Pa. Arch.*, 2nd ser., 2 : 619. This is the earliest contemporary reference to Croghan that was found in the course of this study.

by the fact that only five years after he had left his European environment he was trading on the distant borders of Lake Erie aided by servants and employees.⁴³

In carrying on this trade beyond the mountains, Croghan's packhorse trains usually passed through Croghan's Gap and followed the Juniata-Conemaugh route to the Ohio. Near its forks, he soon established secondary bases of operations. About three miles from the forks on the northwestern side of the Allegheny at the mouth of Pine Creek, Croghan and his partner had a storehouse, some log houses, numbers of batteaux and canoes, ten acres of Indian corn, and extensive fields cleared and fenced. The latter were probably used as pastures. In 1754 the total estimated value of his property was £380. At Oswegle Bottom, which was located on the Youghiogheny, twenty-five miles from the forks of the Ohio, he had another establishment similar to the one at Pine Creek and which was valued at £300.⁴⁴ Another storehouse valued at £150 he had located at the important Indian village of Logstown, about eighteen miles below the forks. This storehouse was used as living quarters by Croghan when at Logstown, by his employees, and by Englishmen who happened to be in Logstown for a short time. Farther down the Ohio at the mouth of the Beaver Creek, in another important Indian village, Croghan also had a "trading house."⁴⁵ Wherever Croghan had a storehouse he probably had at least one person stationed to take care of it and to carry on local trading operations.

From these bases near the forks of the Ohio trading routes spread out like the sticks of a fan. These routes were followed by Croghan often accompanied by

⁴³ Min. of the Prov. Council, June 8, 1747, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 72.

⁴⁴ Croghan's Affidavit of Losses in 1754, made at Carlisle in 1756, O. Co., MSS., 1 : 7.

⁴⁵ Weiser's Journal to Ohio, 1748, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 349.

some employees, by men sent out by him, and by rival traders. One route led up the Allegheny past the present site of Venango. At this place Croghan competed with another Pennsylvania trader, John Frazier, who had here established a trading house and gunsmith's shop. The favorite route of Croghan himself, during his early years, followed the excellent "Great Trail," which led towards Detroit.⁴⁶ It passed through the Wyandot village of one hundred families near the forks of the Muskingum, where Croghan had a prominent trading house valued at £150.⁴⁷ This, however, he regarded chiefly as a post on his trade route to Lake Erie. To the exasperation of the French, he and his men pressed on until Governor Jonquière of Canada complained to Governor Clinton of New York that the English traders were even proceeding to within sight of Detroit and under the very guns of Ft. Miami. Four English traders, two of whom were Croghan's men, were captured here by the French in 1751, taken to Detroit, Quebec, and then to France and were not released until the British Ambassador at Paris demanded it.⁴⁸

In 1747, Croghan is spoken of as "The Trader to the Indians seated on Lake Erie," where he had a number of storehouses.⁴⁹ He was especially fond of the region around Sandusky Bay during this period, because of

⁴⁶ There is an excellent description of travel on this trail by Croghan in his Journal for 1761.—*Mass. Hist. Coll.*, 4th ser., 9 : 378-379.

⁴⁷ Christopher Gist's *Journals*, Dec. 14, 1750, 37.

⁴⁸ Jonquière to Clinton, Aug. 10, 1751, *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, 6 : 731-733; *Pa. Arch.*, 2nd ser., 6 : 126; *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, 18 : 112; John Patten's account, Du Simitiere MSS., Pap. Rel. to Pa., Car. etc.; Raymond to Minister, Nov. 2, 1747, *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, 17 : 474; Vaudreuil to Minister, Dec. 30, 1745, C 13 A 29: 89-92; Moreau, J. N.; *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits, avec leurs pièces justificatives, pour servir de réponse aux Observations envoyées par les ministres d'Angleterre, dans les cours de l'Europe*, App. V, 89ff.

⁴⁹ Rich. Peters to C. Weiser, Sept., 1747 (?), *Prov. Pap.*, 10 : 17; cf. *ibid.*, 9 : 64.

several reasons. “. . . the Northern Indians cross the Lake here from Island to Island, . . .” wrote Evans in 1755,⁵⁰ and Croghan himself wrote: “We sold them goods on much better terms than the French, which drew many Indians over the Lakes to trade with us.”⁵¹ Thus Croghan tapped the great eastward flowing stream of furs which went to Quebec. He made close friends among the Ottawas, allies of the French,⁵² and probably had much to do with the Indian plot of 1747, whose timely discovery by the French prevented an uprising somewhat similar to that of Pontiac. The failure of this plot, together with the coming of peace in 1748 and the more aggressive hostility of the French, seem to have caused Croghan to shift his major attention to the Miami tribes.

The route to the Miami left the Great Trail at the forks of the Muskingum and led west towards Pickawillani, which was located on the upper Great Miami a little below the mouth of Loramie Creek near the present site of Piqua. Gist visited Pickawillani in 1751 and wrote in his Journal: “This Town . . . consists of about 400 Families, & daily encreasing, it is accounted one of the strongest Indian Towns upon this Part of the Continent.”⁵³ A contemporary identifies it by writing, “This is the Village where George Croghan generally Trades, all the Indians of which are firmly attached to the English, . . .”⁵⁴ Here a stockade was erected inside of which were storehouses and log houses. One-fourth of the white men, who were

⁵⁰ Evans, Lewis: *Analysis of a Map of the Middle British Colonies*, 30; cf. Hutchins, Thos.: *Topog. Descrip. of Va., Pa., Md. and N. C.*, 96.

⁵¹ Croghan's Transactions, etc., *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, 7 : 267.

⁵² Croghan states in his Journals that while he was traveling along Lake Erie to Detroit in 1760 he met several Ottawas “who received us very kindly, they being old Acquaintances of mine.”—*Mass. Hist. Coll.*, 4th ser., 9 : 365.

⁵³ Gist's *Journals*, Feb. 17, 1751, 47.

⁵⁴ B. Stoddert to Sir. Wm. Johnson, July 19, 1751, *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, 6 : 730.

captured when the French attacked this village in 1752, were Croghan's associates.⁵⁵ At the time of its destruction, Croghan was making it a new center for his trading operations towards the Wabash.

Croghan also followed the Ohio below the forks for several hundred miles. In 1750 we find him trading at the large Shawnee village, Lower Shawnee Town, near the mouth of the Scioto, where he had a storehouse valued at £200.⁵⁶ His trading ventures probably did not go beyond the falls of the Ohio. For this region he used water transportation to some extent.

From Pine Creek and Lower Shawnee Town as bases, his traders worked the region south of the Ohio in what is today known as West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. Here the curtain is lifted but once to show us a highly significant and interesting incident and we are left to surmise from this what took place during the years before 1754. In January, 1753, a party of seven Pennsylvania traders and one Virginia trader were attacked by seventy French and Indians at a place about one hundred and fifty miles below Lower Shawnee Town on the Kentucky River. All their goods were lost. Two of the traders escaped and six were taken prisoners to Montreal; two of these were sent to France, and later made their return home after many hardships. All except one had been associated with Croghan in business; their loss was stated to have been £267, 18s, of which about forty-five per cent represented the cost of transportation.⁵⁷

It is in the report of this incident that there occurs one of the earliest uses of the word "Kentucky;" it

⁵⁵ Jour. of Capt. Wm. Trent, July 6, 1752, 86-88; O. Co. MSS., 1 : 7.

⁵⁶ Croghan's Deposition, 1777, in *Cal. of Va. State Papers*, 1 : 276; O. Co. MSS., 1 : 7.

⁵⁷ O'Callaghan, F. B.: *Cal. of Hist. MSS. in Office of Sec'y of State*, 603; Letter of the prisoners to R. Saunders, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 627; Trent to Gov. Hamilton, Apr. 10, 1753, *Gist's Journals*, 192; O. Co. MSS., 1 : 7.

being spelled "Kantuequi" and "Cantucky."⁵⁸ Lewis Evans utilized information secured from members of this party for his maps. These traders were trading with the Cherokees in Kentucky and, according to one statement, they had been even in Carolina trading with the Catawbas. The friendly Indian, who was with the party, may have guided them along Warriors' Path into Carolina. No reasonable doubt exists, however, that Croghan's traders frequented Kentucky twenty years before Daniel Boone made his famous excursions into this region.

In a summary of Indian affairs, probably prepared in 1754 for the new Governor of Pennsylvania, there occurs the following unique description of Croghan's field of activities: "Croghan & others had Stores on ye Lake Erie, all along ye Ohio . . ., all along ye Miami River, & up & down all that fine country watered by ye Branches of ye Miamis, Sioto & Muskingham Rivers, & upon the Ohio from . . . near its head, to below ye Mouth of thee Miami River, an Extent of 500 miles, on one of the most beautiful Rivers in ye world, . . ."⁵⁹ With great daring and boldness Croghan pushed out to the periphery of the English sphere of influence where danger was greater, but prizes richer, than in less remote regions. He did not neglect the latter, however. His active and unceasing efforts to push and develop his trade probably did more than any other one factor to increase English influence west of the mountains. The export of furs and skins from Philadelphia showed a marked increase during the decades before 1754. The French came to regard Croghan and his associates as poachers upon their private beaver warrens.

⁵⁸ *Pa. Gaz.*, July 30, 1754; Deposition of one of the prisoners, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 663.

⁵⁹ Detail of Indian Affairs 1752-4, *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 238; the use of the phrase "Croghan and others" instead of "the Pennsylvania Traders" or "the English traders" is excellent evidence of Croghan's pre-eminence.

Of the number of men and packhorses employed by Croghan we can but make an estimate. In his affidavit of losses due to attacks by the French during the period 1749 to 1754, the names of about twenty-five employees occur and more than one hundred packhorses are mentioned as having been captured. In all probability at least a like number escaped attack. It is also probable that on an average at least two men were stationed at each of the half dozen or more posts maintained by Croghan. Those of his traders who were paid a wage received about £2 per month.⁶⁰

About half of his trading activities Croghan conducted solely on his own responsibility; about one-third were carried on in association with William Trent, who was Croghan's partner from 1749 to 1754 and perhaps even longer; in the remaining portion Croghan was "concerned" with William Trent, Robert Callender (Callendar) and Michael Teaffe (Taffe). These four men were associated in trade from about 1749 to 1754.⁶¹

Croghan's chief competitors were the five Lowrey brothers, who were closely associated with the Jewish merchants, Joseph Simon and Levi Andrew Levy at Lancaster; Callender and Teaffe; James Young and John Fraser; the three Mitchells; Paul Pierce, John Finley and William Bryan; and the individual traders, Thomas McKee, Hugh Crawford, John Galbreath, John Owen and Joseph Neilson.⁶² The field available was large enough, however, so that coöperation rather than competition was the rule among Pennsylvania traders. The competition which they met from New York and Maryland was slight and for a long time Virginia Indian traders had a tendency to drift southwest instead of across the mountains. Probably a few entered the

⁶⁰ O. Co. MSS., 1 : 7.

⁶¹ O. Co. MSS., 1 : 7.

⁶² O. Co. MSS., 1 : 85-86.

Ohio country before 1754.⁶³ However, one of the motives in the formation of the Ohio Company in 1749 was to secure a share of the profitable trade which was monopolized by the Pennsylvania traders and had it not been for the coming of the French, in all likelihood a bitter cut-throat competition between the Virginians and the Pennsylvanians would have ensued.⁶⁴

Croghan's eastern factors included Quakers, Episcopalians and Jews. Probably his chief factor was the firm of Shippen and Lawrence; the following quotation from Croghan's letter to Lawrence, dated "Pensborough, Sept. 18, 1747," is illustrative: "I will Send you down the thousand weight of Sumer Skins Directly, by first waggon I Send Down, I have Gott 200 pisterens & som beeswax To Send down to you, as you and I was talking of, To Send To Medera."⁶⁵ In September, 1748, Croghan shipped "1800 weight of fall deer skins" to Philadelphia.⁶⁶ He also had business relations with Jeremiah Warder and Co., S. Burge and Co., Abraham Mitchel and Co. and probably with others.⁶⁷

It is significant to note that even the most prominent Pennsylvania trader after he had developed a prosperous business, did not furnish much of the capital he needed, but secured it in Philadelphia and Lancaster. By far the largest amount was supplied by Richard Hockley, Receiver-General of Quit-rents.⁶⁸ Richard

⁶³ No mention of such traders was encountered in this study. The various memorials sent to the Crown between 1756 and 1775 by the Indian traders, asking restitutions for their losses in the Ohio country from 1749 to 1754, include no Virginia or Maryland traders; had there been many they probably would have pooled their claims in spite of their great rivalry.

⁶⁴ Croghan to ———, July 3, 1749, Prov. Pap. 10 : 62.

⁶⁵ Prov. Pap., 10 : 17. Cf. Croghan to B. Gratz, Mar. 15, 1779, McAllister Coll. (Library Co. of Philadelphia).

⁶⁶ Geo. Gibson to Edw. Shippen, Sept. 28, 1748, Shippen Corresp. 1 : 75.

⁶⁷ Original accounts, O. Co. MSS., 1 : 12, 14, and 68; Peters MSS., 3 : 46. Etting Coll., Misc. MSS.; *Votes of the Assembly*, 4 : 524-525.

⁶⁸ Shippen Corresp., 1 : 159; *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 743; O. Co. MSS., 1 : 15.

Peters, Secretary to the Council, also invested some capital with Croghan,⁶⁹ as did other easterners.

Croghan had probably the largest trade of all the Pennsylvania Indian traders in an age when they were most enterprising. He is spoken of in 1747 in the Minutes of the Provincial Council, as a "considerable Indian Trader" and in 1750, as "the most considerable Indian trader."⁷⁰ Governor Morris in 1756 wrote that "For many years he has been very largely concerned in the Ohio trade. . . ."⁷¹ The lawsuits in the Common Pleas Court of Cumberland County in which Croghan was involved give a side-light on his business status. From 1751 to 1753, eleven cases involving more than £2500 came up.⁷² The long list of Croghan's eastern creditors and the private moratorium for ten years which they succeeded in having passed for him and his partner, Trent, is one measure of the size and importance of his activities. The best concrete evidence which we have of the relative size of his business is contained in the list of losses, due to the coming of the French, of thirty-two individuals or partnerships engaged in the Pennsylvania Indian trade. The total losses were approximately £48,000; Croghan's individual losses were stated to be over £8000, or twice as large as the loss of any other individual; Croghan and Trent's losses were placed at more than £6500, or twice as large as the loss of any other partnership or individual; Croghan, Trent, Callender and Teaffe's losses were placed at almost £2500, and were among the larger

⁶⁹ Deed Bk., A, 1, p. 19, Reg. of Deeds, Carlisle, Pa. We have a long list of Croghan's creditors in 1754, but whether they had furnished him capital or goods, or both is not evident.

⁷⁰ *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 72, 461.

⁷¹ Gov. Morris to Gov. Hardy, July 5, 1756, *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 689.

⁷² O. Co. MSS., 2 : 114. George Ross, who was later to become chairman of the United Illinois and Wabash Land Co., and Joseph Galloway, later interested in the Indiana Co., served as Croghan's attorneys.

losses. Thus Croghan's losses were about one-fourth of the total losses.⁷³ This probably indicates the relative size of his trade.⁷⁴

That Croghan had so quickly reached such a position of pre-eminence was due to several factors. In 1741 the Pennsylvania traders had opened up, but not yet exploited, the rich resources of the upper Ohio country. The French left it unoccupied for another decade and for almost half that time war practically eliminated them as competitors. During King George's War the operations of the British navy made it so difficult for the French to secure goods for the Indian trade that prices advanced as much as one hundred and fifty per cent. The effect of these conditions on Indian relations is suggested in the following unusual episode reported by Weiser in 1747. A French trader in the Ohio country offered but one charge of powder and one bullet to an Indian in exchange for a beaver skin. Thereupon "The Indian took up his Hatchet, and knock'd him on the head, and killed him upon the Spot." Several factors made it also easy in time of peace for Croghan and his fellow English traders to meet French competition. The English practically had a monopoly of rum and strouds, two of the most important articles that entered into the Indian trade; other articles for this trade could be manufactured more advantageously by the English than by the French. Though the English traders were not directly supported by their government, neither were they handicapped by minute regulations.

⁷³ O. Co. MSS., 1 : 85-86; cf. *ibid.*, 1 : 7. In a letter to Sir Wm. Johnson, May 15, 1765, Croghan estimates both his own and Trent's losses at between £5000 and £6000, or about half of their government claim.—Johnson MSS. (N. Y. State Library), 1 : 168. This would not affect the relativity of his losses, however. Cf. *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 663; *Gist's Journals*, 192.

⁷⁴ A modern French historian writes of the "fameux traitant George Croghan l'adversaire acharné des Français."—Villiers du Terrage: *Les Dernières Années de la Louisiane Française*, 87; cf. Moreau: *Mémoire contenant le précis des faits*, etc., App. V, 89ff.

The northern winter closed up the St. Lawrence for nine months out of the year. Because of the rapids in this river it took the French from twenty to forty days to go from Montreal to the Niagara Portage, whereas Pennsylvania traders could go from the Susquehanna to the Ohio in less than twenty days.⁷⁵

Moreover, the character of most of the English traders was such that it was not difficult for an able man to surpass them. Governor Dinwiddie wrote to Governor Hamilton of Pennsylvania on May 21, 1753: "The Indian traders, in general, appear to me to be a set of abandoned wretches," and the Assembly of Pennsylvania, in a message to the Governor, February 27, 1754, said: ". . . our Indian trade [is] carried on (some few excepted) by the vilest of our own Inhabitants and Convicts imported from Great Britain and Ireland. . . . These trade without Controul either beyond the Limits or at least beyond the Power of our Laws, debauching the Indians and themselves with spirituous Liquors. . . ."⁷⁶ Croghan, like James Adair and Alexander Henry, was one of the few men of ability who personally embarked in the Indian trade. The malicious envy of his fellow traders, however, was seldom aroused by his success. Christopher Gist, the agent of the jealous Ohio Company, described him as "a meer Idol among his Countrymen, the Irish traders." However, when Gist was traveling in the interests of the Ohio Company through what is now Ohio and encountered the hostility of the Indians, he used Croghan's name to protect himself and was glad

⁷⁵ Vaudreuil to Minister, Apr. 12, 1746, C 13A, 30 : 57, 245, same to same, Apr. 8, 1747, C 13A, 31 : 52-55; instructions to La Galissonière, etc., Feb. 23, 1748, B 87 : 31; C 13A, 36 : 309; La Galissonière and Hocquart to Minister, Oct. 7, 1747, *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, 17 : 470, 503; Beauharnais to Minister, Sept. 22, 1746, *ibid.*, 17 : 450; Celèron's Journal, *ibid.*, 18 : 43, 57; Weiser's Report, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 86.

⁷⁶ *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 630, 749.

to avail himself of Croghan's company and influence during the journey.⁷⁷

Neither did Croghan arouse the enmity of the natives, as did so many traders, but instead, he furthered his trading operations by making intimate friends among the Indians, particularly of their chiefs; these friends were to stand him in good stead at critical times in later years.⁷⁸ At Logstown, in 1752, when the treaty was being made between Virginia and the Ohio Indians, the leading Iroquois chief, Half King, spoke of Croghan as "our brother, the Buck" who "is approved of by our Council at Onondago, for we sent to them to let them know how he has helped us in our Councils here: and to let you and him know that he is one of our People and shall help us still and be one of our Council."⁷⁹

The friendship of the Indians for Croghan was due to various factors. He learned the Delaware and Iroquois languages and could express himself in the the figurative speech so dear to the Indian.⁸⁰ He had an intimate knowledge of their customs and traits of character. Most important of all, however, was the fact that he regarded the Indian, not as a dog, but as a human being. The Indian was ready to befriend the trader who was reliable and fair in his dealings and who was willing to render services to the red man in need.⁸¹ Not once do the records examined for this study tell us that Croghan personally killed an Indian

⁷⁷ Gist's *Journals*, Nov. 25, 1750, 35.

⁷⁸ Croghan's *Journals and Letters* in Thwaites, R. G.: *Early Western Travels*, 1 : 82, 107, 142, 150.

⁷⁹ "Journal of the Va. Commissioners," *Va. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.* 13; 165; this report was made by rivals of Croghan. Thomson states that Croghan, when in council, sometimes claimed he was an Indian:—*Alienation of the Delawares and Shawnees*, 173.

⁸⁰ Croghan's deposition, 1764, Penn. MSS., Wyoming Controversy, 5 : 71; *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, 7 : 295.

⁸¹ At times Croghan cared for sick Indians in his home.—*Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 13.

or that he gloried in their destruction. He labored to maintain peace between the Indians and the English, knowing well that an Indian war might mean death to many traders and would almost certainly mean bankruptcy to him, since almost the whole of his fortune was represented in packs of skins and furs several hundred miles from the nearest white settlements across the mountains. That Croghan was fearless is self-evident; every Indian trader accepted danger as a matter of his daily routine. The average trader's life must have been short. If a trader survived crisis after crisis when others were ruthlessly struck down, it was usually due to his Indian friends and his own superior intelligence. The material weapons of the white man were of but little value as a means of defense in the heart of the Indian country.⁸²

Other personal qualities which helped to make Croghan successful were his habit of early rising and of putting in long hours of work,⁸³ his vigor, and his shrewd tactfulness in barter. George Morgan in a letter to his wife, July 8, 1766, in describing the members of a rather large party going down the Ohio, said of Croghan: "But above all Mr. Croghan is the most enterprising man, He can appear highly pleased when most chagrined and show the greatest indifference when most pleased. Notwithstanding my warm temper, I know you would rather have me as I am than to practice such deceit."⁸⁴

While a number of factors were responsible for Croghan's success, but one factor, over which he had no control, was responsible for his bankruptcy, viz., the aggression of the French in the Ohio country from 1749

⁸² Byars: *The Fur Trade, the beginning of Transcontinental Highways as Trails followed by Fur Traders*, Gratz Pap., 1st ser. (Mo. Hist. Soc.), 6 : 1-35; cf. *ibid.*, 6 : 44-50.

⁸³ Day, R. E.: *Cal. of Sir. Wm. Johnson MSS.*, 193.

⁸⁴ *Ill. Hist. Coll.*, 11 : 316.

to 1754. The Pennsylvania traders in a memorial asking restitution stated that the French forces and their Indian allies "most barbarously and unexpectedly attacked" them in time of profound peace in Europe.⁸⁵ Croghan summarized the effect on himself as follows: "Capt Trent & myself were deeply engaged in the Indian Trade. We had trusted out great quantities of Goods to the Traders; the chief of them were ruined by Robberies committed on them by the French & their Indians & those which were not quite ruined when the French army came down as well as ours for what the French and Indians had not robed us of, we lost by the Indians being prevented from hunting, by which means we lost all our debts. After this Coll. Washington pressed our Horses by which means a parcell of Goods & Horses we had left fell into the Enemy's hands, our whole losses amounts to between five and Six Thousand Pounds.'⁸⁶

This estimate included goods and horses taken at Venango in 1749 and valued at approximately £1255; goods valued at £329 taken with two traders on the upper Scioto in 1749; seven horse loads of skins and two men taken west of Muskingum in 1750; and three men and their goods taken in the Miami country in 1751. At the capture of Pickawillani, assuming that Croghan had an equal share in those goods which belonged to Croghan and Trent and to Croghan, Trent, Callender and Teaffe, Croghan lost approximately £1000, or one-third of the total loss. In 1753 goods valued at £267, 18s. were captured on the Kentucky River. The news of other attacks by the French early in 1753 sent Croghan and some of his traders hurrying back through the woods or up the Ohio and caused Trent to leave Virginia with provisions for them. No longer was it safe for an English trader to venture far beyond the

⁸⁵ O. Co. MSS., 1 : 5.

⁸⁶ Croghan to Sir Wm. Johnson, May 15, 1765. Johnson MSS., 1 : 168.

forks of the Ohio. John Frazier, who had left Venango and established himself fourteen miles south of the forks, wrote on August 27, 1753: "I have not got any Skins this Summer, for there has not been an Indian between Weningo and the Pict Country hunting this Summer, by reason of the French."⁸⁷ In the fall of 1753, the French occupied Venango. Callender and Teaffe, Croghan's associates, wrote home describing conditions and added, "Pray, Sir, keep the News from our wives, but let Mr. Peters know of it, . . ."⁸⁸ Croghan's men and packhorses were near the Ohio in 1754 awaiting developments, when Washington commandeered the horses to help carry his cannon and stores on his retreat to Ft. Necessity, leaving to the French goods of Croghan and Trent, valued at £369.

Croghan's losses included, besides movable goods and horses, boats, buildings, and improvements on lands; debts of the Indians, which made up one-half of the total losses; and most serious of all, the entire field of his activities, where all of his customers lived, was now entirely closed to him. The business which he had built up through years of activity was ruined and he himself was so deeply involved in debt that if he returned to his home in the east he would be imprisoned for debt.

To a man who for years had known the freedom of the western wilderness and to whom the sky had served as a roof, night after night, death was preferable to immurement in a cell of an eighteenth century debtor's jail. Croghan therefore kept out of the immediate reach of the law and established a new home near the path which he had traveled for many years. This he located on Aughwick Creek near its confluence with the Juniata, at the site of the present town of Shirleysburg.

⁸⁷ O. Co. MSS., 1 : 7-8; *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 222; Trent to Gov. Hamilton, Apr. 10, 1753, *Gist's Journals*, 192; *ibid.*, 37; *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 660.

⁸⁸ Letter to Wm. Buchanan, Sept. 2, 1753, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 684.

Here, surrounded by mountains on all sides, was a small fertile valley which still belonged to the Indians in 1753. Croghan had erected a house here as early as September, 1753, and his whereabouts was well known to the authorities of Pennsylvania.⁸⁹ "I Live 30 Miles back of all Inhabitation on ye frontiers. . . ." wrote Croghan to Sir William Johnson, on September 10, 1755,⁹⁰ while to Governor Hamilton he wrote on November 12, 1755: "From ye Misfortunes I have had in Tread, which obliges me to keep at a Greatt distance, I have itt nott in my power to forward Intelegence as soon as I could wish. . . ."⁹¹ After Braddock's defeat, the oncoming tide of fire and slaughter threatened to envelop Croghan in his exposed position; friendly Indians came with intelligence of raids by the French and their Indian allies and desired that Croghan be given "speedy Notice to remove or he would certainly be killed," and several times rumors came to Philadelphia that he had been cut off.⁹²

Life at Aughwick was not so difficult, nor was Croghan so destitute, as might be supposed. He still had at least fifty packhorses, and like the typical frontiersman, he had some cattle. He also had some negro slaves and some servants; the latter were probably indentured servants. His brother staid with him and doubtless some of his employees remained with him. Conrad Weiser, who visited him, reported to the Governor that Croghan had butter and milk, squashes and pumpkins, and between "twenty-five and thirty Acres of the best Indian Corn I ever saw;" Croghan made his home at Aughwick from 1753 to about July, 1756. To protect themselves, he and his men erected a stockade

⁸⁹ *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 5 : 675, 707; *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 689.

⁹⁰ Johnson MSS., 2 : 212.

⁹¹ *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 484.

⁹² *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 452, 454.

around their log buildings. It is self-evident that this was not an ordinary squatter's improvement. After the French and Indian War Croghan secured legal title to the lands which he had improved and to other nearby tracts.⁹³ Under the circumstances, imprisonment would be unjust. Croghan's services as Indian Agent to Pennsylvania deserved consideration. If imprisoned he could not reëngage in business and thus pay his numerous creditors. But most important was the need by the government for his great knowledge of Indian affairs and for his influence with the Indians during the critical times which followed Braddock's defeat.

In other similar cases where only a few small creditors were concerned, the usual method of a general letter of license was employed,⁹⁴ but Croghan's creditors were so numerous and scattered that this method was not feasible in his case. As early as December 2, 1754, he had written Peters asking if the Assembly could not pass an act of bankruptcy for himself and Trent, and if so, how he should proceed.⁹⁵

Some of his friends evidently interested themselves in his cause, for on November 26, 1755, a petition was introduced into the Assembly, signed by fifteen of his creditors, asking leave to bring in a bill granting Croghan and Trent freedom for ten years from all legal procedure to collect debts contracted before the passage of the act. This was granted and the bill was promptly passed and sent to the Governor. When he considered it in Council, Richard Hockley appeared and stated that he had not been notified of the proposed action, though he had been in partnership with Croghan and Trent and was by far their largest creditor; he suggested

⁹³ James Burd to ———, Mar. 11, 1755, Shippen Corresp. 1 : 173; Croghan to Gov. Morris, May 20, 1755, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 6 : 399; Weiser to Gov. Hamilton, Sept. 13, 1754, *ibid.*, 149.

⁹⁴ *Votes of Assembly*, 4 : 524; Byars: *B. and M. Gratz*, 31.

⁹⁵ *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 211; *ibid.*, 214.

an amendment which the Governor and assembly accepted and the bill became law on December 2, 1755.⁹⁶

The charter of Pennsylvania required that all acts be submitted to the crown for approval or disapproval within five years of their passage. The act passed on December 2, 1755, was not delivered by the agent of the Penns to the Clerk of the Privy Council till January 20, 1758. On February 10, this body referred it to the Board of Trade for examination. The Board of Trade at once referred it to the Attorney-General, who reported back to it on April 10, 1758, that there was no legal objection to the act. The Board then discussed the merits of the act, granting the Penns an opportunity to state their attitude. On May 12, the Board in a representation to the Privy Council recommended that the act be disallowed. On June 16, an order in council was issued in almost the exact words of the representation, disallowing the act. A copy of this order was sent to the Board of Trade on May 21, 1760, and read there on July 8. It then informed the Governor and Colonial Agent of Pennsylvania of the action taken.

The order in council expressed surprise at the delay in delivering the act, that such an extraordinary indulgence should be granted on the petition of only a portion of the creditors and that the bill should be introduced one morning, read twice during the same morning, never committed, and passed on the afternoon of the same day; it annulled the act as being unjust and partial, irregularly passed, contrary to the rules of justice in all cases affecting private property and a dangerous precedent. By the time, however, that this

⁹⁶ *Votes of Assembly*, 4 : 524-527; *Pa. Stat. at Large*, 5 : 212-216; *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 6 : 743-745; Gov. Morris to Gov. Hardy, July 5, 1756, *Pa. Arch.*, 2 : 689; Hockley's amendment is not given. He had made a special agreement with Croghan and Trent.—James Burd to——, Sept. 25, 1754, *Shippen Corresp.*, 1 : 159; O. Co. MSS., 1 : 15.

order reached America and came to the notice of the various creditors, Croghan had enjoyed the benefits of the act during about five of the ten years provided by it. He had made some arrangements to meet his obligations and was now an imperial official performing much-needed war services, and hence imprisonment from debt no longer troubled him.⁹⁷

The traders who suffered losses as a result of the French aggression, together with the eastern merchants who were their creditors, soon began an active, well-planned campaign to secure restitution. Efforts were made by Croghan and Trent to collect, first from Virginia and then from Braddock, the losses incurred when Washington impressed their horses. After these efforts failed, Croghan, Trent, a number of their employees, and nine other traders gathered at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and made numerous detailed affidavits of their losses. Croghan himself made five affidavits. Governor Morris signed the complete document, which listed about half of all claims made. A number of traders also gathered at Lancaster and Philadelphia and took similar action.⁹⁸

These thirty-two traders then authorized William Trent to draw up a memorial in their behalf to be presented to George II in Council.⁹⁹ It asked for reimbursement out of the money received from the sale of French prizes taken before the declaration of war in retaliation for French aggression. These prizes were sold for £650,000;¹⁰⁰ the total traders' claims amounted

⁹⁷ *Acts of the Privy Council, Col. Ser., 1745-1766*, 341; Board of Trade Pap., Prop., XX, W 14, W 20, W 49; Board of Trade Journal, 68; 189; *Pa. Stat. at Large*, 4 : 576, 577, 582, 584, 585, 592; *Pa. Col. Rec.* 8 : 320. This is a good illustration of the way in which royal disallowance of Pennsylvania laws actually worked.

⁹⁸ O. Co. MSS., 1 : passim, particularly 7, 85, 86.

⁹⁹ O. Co. MSS., 1 : 5-7.

¹⁰⁰ *Acts of the Privy Council, Col. Ser., Unbound Pap.*, 353.

to £48,572, 4d. The critical situation during the war caused this memorial to be neglected. When peace negotiations began, another memorial was sent to the crown asking that the French be required to indemnify the traders and merchants. Its failure ended the attempts to secure restitution in money from the French. Thereafter all efforts were directed towards securing restitution in the form of a large grant of land from the Indian allies of the French; this promised greater speculative opportunities.

Meanwhile many traders had transferred their interests in the project to the merchants whom they owed. Croghan and Trent had agreed with Richard Hockley that his debt should be paid first out of any money they received; Hockley and Thomas Penn in England became their attorneys to push their cause. After 1763, the entire project became associated with the more promising project of the "Suff'ring Traders" of Pontiac's uprising for which it served as a precedent and which led to the "Indiana plan," which will be described in a later chapter. In December, 1763, Croghan, Trent, Samuel Wharton, David Franks and eight other traders and merchants interested in both projects met at Indian Queen Tavern, Philadelphia, to lay plans which would take advantage of Croghan's proposed journey to England. Croghan and a merchant in London, Moses Franks, were made the agents of the group and £410 sterling was contributed for their expenses. They were spurred on by the guarantee of five per cent of all money or land secured. The agents were to present a memorial in person. They sought the aid of Generals Amherst and Gage, Colonel Bouquet, the Governor, Assembly and the London Agent of Pennsylvania, the Penns, and all the British merchants who had any connections with the persons involved and who might bring influence to bear on the Board of Trade or the Privy Council. In spite of all these efforts, no re-

sults were secured.¹⁰¹ An indirect approach was now attempted as a last resort. Sir William Johnson was requested to secure a grant of land from the Six Nations at Ft. Stanwix for the claimants of 1754 similar to the grant secured by the claimants of 1763. He maintained that the Six Nations were not responsible in the former case and refused the request.

Nevertheless, when Trent and Wharton went to England to represent the claimants of 1763, they also planned to secure some recompense for the claimants of 1754. Trent secured a renewal of his powers of attorney from thirteen of the latter, of whom Croghan was one. To secure the necessary funds, Trent turned over his powers to Samuel Wharton, David Franks, Benjamin Levy, Thomas Lawrence, Edward Shippen, Jr., and Joseph Morris. These were to receive one-half of all money or lands secured in return for financing the project. They sent Moses Franks to London, who, on February 22, 1771, presented to the Board of Trade a memorial in behalf of George Croghan, William Trent, and eleven other Indian traders. In 1773 he was still in England cooperating with William Trent to secure favorable action.¹⁰²

Some of the other claimants of 1754 refused to give precedence to the claimants of 1763, or to cooperate with them. They presented a separate memorial in 1769 asking that no lands be granted to the claimants of 1763 unless all traders who had suffered losses from 1750 to 1763 be granted a proportionate recompense. This division weakened the cause of all the claimants. Their claims were still pending when the Revolution

¹⁰¹ Minutes of the Meeting in Philadelphia, Instructions to Croghan and Franks, and the Memorial are found in the Johnson MSS., 24 : 190-191; cf. O. Co. MSS., 1 : 15-16.

¹⁰² The legal papers drawn up in America are found in the O. Co. MSS., 1 : 57-71; Trent to Moses Franks, Jan. 1, 1773, *ibid.*, 97; *Royal Hist. MSS. Com., Fourteenth Report, Appendix, Part X, MSS. of the Earl of Dartmouth*, 2 : 74.

ended all hopes of securing restitution from England.¹⁰³

Some of the traders who had lost so heavily in 1754 maintained that they were not bound to pay their debts to the merchants unless they received restitution. "I will pay them when I am reimbursed and surely that is all they can ask of me or anybody else," wrote one of them.¹⁰⁴ Croghan, however, tried to free himself of his liabilities. As early as 1754 he had conveyed some lands in the Cumberland Valley to Richard Peters. In 1761, Croghan and Trent paid £1000 to their creditors and transferred to them some lands on Aughwick Creek, receiving a full discharge from all their creditors, even though this did not completely cover their debts. They had, however, in addition, assigned to their creditors a prior lien on all financial reimbursement which they might receive from the crown. When it seemed as though they might be reimbursed in land, their creditors tried to include it under the above assignment, but to this Croghan would not submit. The debts which Croghan did not pay in full remained to trouble him to his last days. He felt morally bound to pay the principal, but not the interest. On March 15, 1779, he wrote to Barnard Gratz ". . . . itt was of my own free will I promised to pay all those old Debts which was Nott Commonly Done by people that failed in Trade." Some of his creditors insisted on being paid both principal and interest and also asked for payment in coin which during the Revolution was very difficult to obtain; consequently, they failed to secure a settlement.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ O. Co. MSS., 1 : 53, 57; Acts of the Privy Council, June 9, 1769, 2 : 114, p. 44.

¹⁰⁴ Hugh Crawford to Trent, Dec. 10, 1768, O. Co. MSS., 1 : 54.

¹⁰⁵ Peters MSS., 6 : 87; Deed of D. Franks and J. Warder to Croghan and Trent, July 19, 1761, Deed Bk. M, I : 402, Register of Deeds, Huntingdon Co., Pa.; Croghan to J. Warder and D. Franks, Dec. 21, 1768, Gratz Pap. 1st ser., 8 : 105; Croghan to B. Gratz, March 15, 1779, McAllister Coll.

Never again after 1754 did Croghan devote his major attention to the Indian trade. At intervals he made a few shipments of furs and skins to London or Philadelphia, and in the early seventies he was associated with Thomas Smallman in the Indian trade. He also assisted such friends as the Gratzs to make good connections with the Indians. His chief attention after 1754, however, was devoted to his work as an Indian agent and later on to land speculation and western colonizing projects.¹⁰⁶ Even before the inroads of the French into the Ohio region became serious, his interest was being transferred to furthering the official relations between the Ohio Indians and Pennsylvania. Private as well as public interests caused such men as Croghan to enter into the service of the government to aid in saving English rule in the West.

Croghan's wide experience for over a decade in the actual field work as an Indian trader was the foundation upon which his later career was built. During these years he secured an intimate first hand knowledge of the Indian, learning how to manage the red man and making personal friends with some of the chiefs. He also learned to know the frontiersman and the friends he made among his more able white associates cooperated with him in later years. And finally, he became well known to the wealthy merchants and highest officials in Lancaster and Philadelphia; these were the men who gave him his first opportunities to show his value as an Indian agent and to whom Croghan was

¹⁰⁶ These statements are based on the lack of any evidence in the records examined to show large and consistent trading activities. For the exceptions see, *Pa. Col. Rec.*, 9 : 495; *PA. MAG. OF HIST. AND GEOG.*, 37; 13, 194; *O. Co. MSS.*, 2 : 24; Croghan to M. Gratz, July 29, 1773 and to B. and M. Gratz, Aug. 26, 1772, Simon Gratz Coll. A striking exception is a consignment of furs valued at £1200 sterling and shipped via Detroit and Quebec to London:—Croghan to Richard Neave and Son, June 24, 1767, Dreer Coll.

to bring a new interest in the great West beyond the mountains.

During the period 1741 to 1754, Croghan left behind him the life of Dublin and was transformed into a typical American frontiersman. He followed the roads that led west from Philadelphia, and traveled practically every path and trail which began where the roads left off, crossed the mountain barrier, and then spread out over the region bounded by Lake Erie, the Maumee and Wabash Rivers and the Cumberland Mountains. He crossed and recrossed the mountains. His journeys enabled him to spy out the finest lands strategically located. As he lived day after day in the fertile valley of the Ohio and on the Lake Plain in the primeval forests, he unconsciously imbibed a deep-seated appreciation of the vast possibilities of the region, which was later to develop into a vision of the future greatness of the trans-Allegheny region. His deep love for the western wilderness and his outlook towards the west were to have a dynamic influence during the next two decades upon the leaders who lived in the Delaware Valley and whose outlook was towards the ocean. His influence was also to be felt in Virginia, New York, New Jersey and in London itself.

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(To be continued.)

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